

# THE NUMISMATIC JOURNAL.

IN THE INTEREST OF COIN AND CURIOSITY COLLECTORS.

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## THE NUMISMATIC JOURNAL.

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### Coins of Different Countries.

#### *Concluded.*

*Venice*—begins coinage in the 10th Century. The first coins are silver pennies marked *Veneci*. Then follow the coins of Henrico Dandolo in 1192. Of Ziani in 1205, etc. Gold was first coined at Venice in 1280 and copper in 1471, but the silver Groats are as old as 1192.

*Florence*. Silver was coined here in the 12th. Century or before, but in 1252 the first gold coins struck in Europe after the 8th. Century made their appearance and were named *Florins*, from the figure or flower of the lily upon them. They were imitated by the Popes, and by France and England. They have on one side St. John the Baptist, standing; on the other a large *Fleur de lis* and it is not doubted that the French took their origin from these coins. They were drachms and were no less than 24 carats fine according to Italian writers and were worth about \$3.00.

*Geneva*—first began to coin money in 1129 under the government of Conrad. Those of the Dukes of Savoy began in the same Century.

*French Coins*. During the race of Clovis from 490 to 751 the coins are chiefly gold *triens*. They are of good workmanship with the heads of Kings. The reverse has a cross

with the name of the town when they were struck. The coins of the second race began with Pepin in 751 and continued until Hugh Capet in 798.

The coins of the first race are elegant, but those of the second quite the reverse; being almost always silver specimens and seldom bearing the portrait of the King. Those of Charlemagne have only Carolus in the field while the reverse bears R. F. or some such inscription, though one piece struck at Rome has a rude bust of him. The coins of Louis le Debonnaire are better done. The third race begins with Hugh Capet in 987 and extends to this time. The coinage did not begin to improve till 1226 when the Groat appears. Its name in Italian is *groso*; in French *grosse*; in English groats or great coin. So called from its size in comparison with the penny, and it passed from Italy to France to Germany and to England. After the Conquest of France by the English base coins of many kinds were introduced and in the year 1574, in the time of Henry III Copper was first introduced into the French coinage. Besides these the other remarkable coins of France are the blancs or billon groats, first issued in 1348. Then of Ann in 1498. The tesoton or piece with the Kings head of Louis the XII, the Benri with Gaul sitting in Armor and a victory in her hand. Then there are many coins of Cardinal Bourbon elected King in 1589, and in 1642 Louis the XIV takes the title of Catoliniae Princeps. The first of Louis d'lor made its appearance in 1640, but such was the poverty of France (if we believe certain authors), that in 1719 Duke of Orleans, regent, struck Copper for Silver.

*Spanish Coins*. The most early series of these consist almost entirely of *trientes* finely done.



On one side they have the head of a King with his name, on the other, a cross, with the name of the town, commonly Boetica or the fourth part of Spain, where there were many Roman Colonies, and which was fertile to a proverb. The Moresque coins of Spain like those of the rest of the Mohammedan States presents us only with insipid inscriptions on both sides. The Mohammedan religion, by its absolute refusal to allow the representation of any living creature, has prevented the progress of coinage in any degree throughout those regions which it has overspread. The inscriptions on the ancient Spanish coins are in the Cubee or old Arabic characters.

*Denmark.* Here the coinage begins with Canute the Great in 1014. The pieces are at first extremely rude, ornamented only with rings and Runic characters. These are succeeded by copper pieces, some of which have a cross, others a pastoral staff on one side and the letter A on the other. Later coins have strokes IIII etc. all around them but those of Harold Hardecnute and Magnus Bonus, in 1041, are of neat workmanship and have the portrait of the Princes at half length. The coins of Nicholas or Neil, as he is called by the Danes, are rude as well as those of Waldemar the 1st. and the celebrated Margaret. In 1376 Olaf caused money to be struck with grinning full face and a crowned O upon the other side. The Sweedes (says Mr. Pinkerton) took these coins extremely ill, as they thought they grinned at them. Silver was first coined in Denmark by Phillipa, Queen of Eric and daughter of Henry IV of England.

### *Ancient Manner of Coinage.*

The manner of coining money by *striking* was very imperfect as compared with modern mint machinery. The *flan* (or planchet) not being fixed between the two dies, they glided frequently from side to side under the blows and the stamp did not always come in the centre of the coins. Nor was this all. The person who held the *cuneus* or wedge, often carelessly *tipped* it from the perpendicular, and so the coin was made thinner on one edge than the other, and the inscription correspondingly plainer.

It is extremely rare, not to say with some Authors impossible, to find *hammered* pieces struck from the same die. Very few ancient dies exist in collections of Antiquaries.

We know but little of the persons appointed by the Greeks to make their money, but with the Romans, that part of the administration was established about A. V. C. 547 (B. C. 206). These magistrates styled *tri-umviri aeri, auro flando, argento*, that is, "the three magistrates for coining bronze, gold and silver" were appointed to oversee the public mintage. They set their names upon the coins at times, even up to the 8th century of Rome. There were appointed over them a Questor Urbain, the *Curator denariorum flandorem*. This triumvirate of coinage was reckoned among the most dignified positions. It was commonly bestowed upon young gentlemen of family. Caesar increased the number of these magistrates to four, as indeed he enlarged the number of public offices generally to give place to his followers, but Augustus re-established the number, three, and they so remained. From the time of Tiberius (deceased A. D. 37) the Curatores Monetæ were distinct from the Urban Questors. Under the Emperors of Constantinople the triumvirate ceased to exist. They were succeeded by a Count of Sacred Gifts who was overseer of the mint under the command of procurators styled Presidents of the various Mints.

The laborers in the Mint of the Republic were government slaves; of the Empire, the Emperors slaves. They formed a real corporation which became so large as sometimes to disquiet the Emperors, lest they should revolt. The Emperor Aurelian, indeed, was compelled to lead his army against the Coin making operatives in the mint at Rome, and Julian, nearly a century later, conducted his troops against the same class who had revolted at Syzicus, where the mint was large and long established.

The Chiefs of the mints; the exactors who recorded the metal; the nummularius officinae or Cashier; the chief of the engravers, belonged to the class of freemen. The weighers (*aequa-tores*), the assayers, the men who made the planchets (*flans* or blanks), the placers who laid



the flan on the inclosure, the hammerers, who struck and the signatores who engraved the dies, were slaves. All these united formed a strong corps entitled *familia monetalis*. —*Numismatic Pilot*.

—Ambition sighed: she found it vain to trust  
The faithless column and the crumbling dust.  
Huge moles, whose shadows stretched from  
shore to shore,

Their ruins perished and their place no more.  
Convinced, she now constructs her vast design  
And all her triumphs shrink into a *Coin*.

A narrow orb each crowded conquest keeps;  
Beneath her palm here sad Judea weeps!  
And scarce are seen the prostrate Nue and  
Rhine.

A small Euphrates through the piece is rolled,  
And little Eagles wave their wings in gold.

—POPE.

#### Treasure Troves.

1793, *June*. Three miles from Ayr, in an old middenstead, were found from 20 to 30 gold coins of Mary of Scotland, being testoons and half-testoons of her and Francis, including those of 1555 and 1562, with bullion of 1558 and 9. Among them were the rare and beautiful testoon with her head, 1562, those with *Cor Humile Delicie Dni, In virtute tua libera me, fecit utraque unum, vicit leo tribu Juda, Jam non suat sed una caro, and saluum fac populum tuum Domini*; they were sold for 5s. 6d. per ounce.

1793, December. At Strathblane in Stirling-shire, a large collection of coins were discovered in the hollow end of a couple which had supported the roof of a house; it had been sawed off a great many years before and was used as a seat but on a scarcity of coal was cut up for fuel when the treasure was discovered; it principally consisted of coins of Edward VI., Elizabeth and Charles I.; those of the last monarch were Scotch coined by Briot, there were also some German crowns, the gold sovereign of Elizabeth and unit of James I.

1795. *January 10*.—In Glasgow in leveling

the ground at the north end of Taylors street and the north side of Rotton Row, where an old ruinous house stood, the workmen dug up with a pickaxe an eathern pot nearly the size of a Scotch pint, full of gold coins of various sizes; the number was uncertain, as the workmen and bystanders had a scramble for them, but they probably amounted to between eight or nine hundred coins; they consisted of unicorns of James III. and IV., ryders and half-ryders angels of Henry IV. and Henry VIII., with several French, Spanish and Portuguese, and were supposed to have been buried during the troubles in Mary's reign. Four ounces sold for 4s. 4d. each, containing upwards of thirty coins.

1803—At Torfoot seven miles west of Strat Ravers in Lanarkshire, a boy in cleaning out a drain at the foot of a rising ground, struck upon a glass vessel containing four hundred Roman silver coins of various emperors and empresses, viz.: Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Faustina, Marcus Aurelius, Crispina, Caesar, Pompey, Crassus, etc.

1806—A man from Mears came into Mr. Gray's shop, Glasgow, with nineteen gold coins, which he found in making a midden or dung-hill by shoveling up some earth where an old house stood, and not half a foot deep; the coins were mostly Scotch and of James VI., and included some thistle nobles, several 6£ pieces of the dates 1601–2, a unit or broad piece of James and one French louis d'or in good preservation; they sold for 6£ per ounce.

1831, *February 3*. At Arthur's seat, Edinburgh, a parcel of old silver and copper coins were found by the workmen on the railroad, among the *debris* under Sampsons Ribs.

#### Coining Sales.

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